



Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary November 2020

1. **Introduction:**

- A. Service Area:** Community Action of Eastern Iowa (CAEI) is the designated Community Action Agency for Cedar, Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott counties in Iowa. CAEI's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program serves nineteen counties in southeastern Iowa. CAEI's Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program serves the core four counties plus Jackson County.

The primary four-county service area has a population of 280,371 as of 2017. The population in the area has increased by 4.33% between 2000 and 2017. Cedar, Muscatine, and Scott counties have all realized increases in population, while Clinton County's population has decreased by 5.11% during that time.^A

- B. Poverty:** There are 12,788 households (32,135 people) with income below the federal poverty level in the service area.
- 1) 11.53% of all households have an income below the poverty level.
 - 2) 59.5% of the households in poverty are headed by single-parent females.
 - 3) 13.1% of Clinton County residents have an income below the poverty rate, the highest rate of the four-county area.
 - 4) Women are more likely to have an income below the poverty line than men.
 - 5) The poverty rate for Black or African American residents (34.64%) is roughly three times the poverty rate for the population as a whole (11.69%).
 - 6) For young children ages birth to four years old, the poverty rate is 18.8%. For Black or African American children ages birth to four years old, the poverty rate is 60.82%.^A

- 2. Approach:** This Community Needs Assessment Executive Summary is the culmination of a comprehensive examination of the needs in our community. The Key Findings and community resources identified in this Executive Summary are drawn from the following sources, included in the appendix to this report.

A: Community Action Partnership Assessment Report: A quantitative data report including U.S. Census and other records relevant to the service area.

B: 2019 Head Start Community Needs Assessment: A comprehensive early-childhood focused needs assessment that included survey results from 275 Head Start and Early Head Start parents, 145 local child care partners, and 90 CAEI Head Start and Early Head Start staff members.

C: 2019 Customer Needs and Satisfaction Assessment: In the summer of 2019, 403 CAEI customers completed a comprehensive survey regarding unmet household needs. Customer satisfaction data was also collected from the households.

D: 2017 Community Stakeholders Needs Assessment: 356 community stakeholders completed an online survey regarding community needs. Stakeholders included community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, private sector businesses, public sector officials, educational institutions, the CAEI Board of Directors, the Head Start Policy Council, and agency staff.

E: 2019 Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Final Report: The final report documenting outputs and outcomes from the 2019 CAEI CSBG Report.

F: 2018-2019 Head Start and Early Head Start Program Information Reports (PIR): The statistical reports for CAEI's Head Start and Early Head Start Program.

G: 2018 Performance and Outcomes Report for the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) Program: A report of quantitative and qualitative FaDSS program outcomes.

H: Child Care Resource & Referral Data Sheets: Statistical summaries of child care in the service area, including its availability, quality, and cost.

Key findings were identified and presented to all employees in a serial format by email. A virtual discussion was conducted for each key need, and the conditions, causes, and community resources were clarified and expanded based on the discussion.

The Board of Directors reviewed the Executive Summary and the source documents and provided input into the development of this Executive Summary. The Board of Directors approved the Executive Summary at its November 2019 Board Meeting.

3. **Key Findings: Customer Needs:** The Community Needs Assessment revealed several customer needs. Customer needs include the needs of individuals, families, and children living in poverty within the service area.

Families Lack Basic Need Items:

A. Conditions:

- 1) More than 400 customers were asked to identify their household's unmet needs. They were asked to answer whether they have unmet needs in more than 75 categories. The top three most frequent responses were:
 - a. Help obtaining clothing and shoes (103/403 – 26%)
 - b. Affording personal care items such as toilet paper, cleaning supplies, and household items (97/407 – 24%)
 - c. Obtaining basic furniture and appliances (93/407 – 23%)^c

- 2) 16% of households responding to the Customer Needs Assessment reported not having telephone service.^C
- 3) 37% of households responding to the Customer Needs Assessment do not have access to the internet^C, and more than half of community stakeholders believe that high-speed internet is not affordable for families with low income.^D
- 4) CAEI's 24/7 Food Pantry and Diaper Pantry are having a difficult time accessing the resources needed to keep up with the requests for services from our customers and our community partners.^E

B. Causes:

- 1) Clothing and shoes are often viewed as expenses that are handled from a household's discretionary income. Households with insufficient income are not able to prioritize shoes and clothing purchases.
- 2) The area has a high eviction rate. When families are evicted, they often lose their personal belongings because they have no place to put them and cannot afford storage.
- 3) Receipt of Family Investment Program (FIP) (welfare) in Iowa is declining precipitously, reducing household financial resources.
- 4) While there are resources to help families with food and utilities, there are few community resources to help with personal care items such as soap, toilet paper, and cleaning supplies. Multiple Customer Needs Assessment respondents said they didn't have enough money left after paying rent, utilities, and food to buy basic items they needed like, "toilet paper, paper towels, dog food and cat food," and "buying basic necessities like shampoo, toilet paper."^C

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Dress for Success, Goodwill, Salvation Army, and various thrift stores provide low-cost clothing and shoes, although shoes are often difficult to find, especially for children.
- 2) There are few resources for personal care items, although there are a few micro-pantry initiatives.
- 3) Slumberland has provided beds to children on a limited basis.
- 4) SEAP provides one-time assistance for a variety of needs in the community.

Families Need Mental Health Services:

A. Conditions:

- 1) CAEI customers experience mental health issues at a rate higher than the general community. 40% of households completing a needs survey said someone in their household had unmet mental health needs.^C
- 2) 45 Head Start children and 9 Early Head Start children received mental health consultation in the 2018-2019 school year (9.2% of enrolled children).^F
- 3) 12 Head Start parents received mental health consultation during the 2018-2019 school year.^F

- 4) 66% of community stakeholders believe there are not enough mental health resources in the community.^D
- 5) One out of every five Head Start parents in Cedar County stated that they needed additional counseling and mental health supports in Tipton.^B
- 6) 68% of FaDSS participants with a substantiated mental health barrier received mental health treatment.^G

B. Causes:

- 1) When asked an open-ended question about what they would most like to see improved in their community, improved mental health services were the most frequently mentioned by community stakeholders, indicating a general lack of available resources.^D
- 2) Iowa changed its mental health funding formula, and this has resulted in lower funding for the region.
- 3) The privatization of Medicaid in Iowa has resulted in service changes and reductions.
- 4) Agency leadership staff believes we may be underserving Head Start and Early Head Start children and families in the area of mental health based on the numbers above.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) CAEI has agreements with the Child Abuse Council, Families Inc., Family Resources, and Vera French to provide mental health services for CAEI Head Start and Early Head Start families and children.
- 2) CAEI provides employee assistance program services to its employees and their household members through Aetna Health.
- 3) The area is served by the Eastern Iowa Mental Health and Disability Services Region, a consortium of providers that delivers comprehensive mental health services.
- 4) CAEI partners with Bridgeview Mental Health Center in Clinton.
- 5) New Choices in Clinton has an IHH program (integrated home health) for people who have chronic mental health issues. Workers assist clients with grocery shopping, appointments, accessing assistance programs, etc.

Families Lack Sufficient Food and Nutrition:

A. Conditions:

- 1) Not having enough food at home was the seventh-most cited unmet need of CAEI customers (61/403 (15%) people surveyed reported not having enough food).^C
- 2) Less than half of the households who could benefit from participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) take advantage of the program.
 - a. 44.2% of all households in the service area with income below the poverty level receive SNAP benefits (compared to 43.1% for Iowa, and 45.3% for the United States).^A
 - b. 58.2% of Head Start/Early Head Start families (41.4%) receive SNAP benefits.^F

- c. One-third of CAEI customers completing the community needs assessment survey (127/403 households) reported that they do not receive SNAP (food stamp) benefits, despite qualifying for CAEI services.^C
- 3) Customers also reported not being able to get enough food from area food pantries (53/403 or 15%). This was most prevalent in Scott County.^C
- 4) 508 families were assisted with emergency food by CAEI's 24/7 Food Pantry in the first 10 months of operation of this new initiative.^E
- 5) Six percent of households surveyed asked for help learning to stretch their food budget.^C
- 6) More than half (55.4%) of all Head Start/Early Head Start families do not receive Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits. Families are eligible to participate until the child's fifth birthday.

B. Causes:

- 1) As TANF changes have gone into effect, reducing the number of households receiving FIP (welfare), food pantry usage across the nation has increased.
- 2) Despite record unemployment, families are struggling in lower-wage positions that often offer only part-time hours.
- 3) SNAP application and eligibility processes are complex and difficult to follow.
- 4) Small towns and rural areas are seeing a decline in local grocery stores and a rise in dollar stores. The only grocery store in LeClaire recently closed, for example.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) The River Bend Foodbank provides food for thousands of area households annually through a network of community pantries, including mobile pantries.
- 2) Community Action of Eastern Iowa's 24/7 Food Pantry provides emergency food when other pantries are closed or when transportation needs are a barrier to families accessing community food pantries.
- 3) In Clinton, CAEI participates in the Pantries United initiative.
- 4) Iowa State University Extension provides community-based food and nutrition education.

Families Lack Transportation:

A. Conditions:

- 1) More than 400 CAEI customers were surveyed regarding their unmet household needs. Transportation needs were prominently identified:
 - a. Nearly 10% of the respondents said they needed, but did not have, a reliable vehicle.
 - b. 9% said they needed help with vehicle repairs. Scott and Clinton County residents are more likely to need vehicle repairs than Muscatine or Cedar County residents.
 - c. 9% said they could not afford auto insurance.

- d. 7% of households surveyed reported difficulty getting to and from work and medical appointments.
 - e. 6% of the adults completing the survey said they needed help getting a driver's license.^C
- 2) 85% of all employed adults in the service area commute in a car with one person in the vehicle. The average commute time is 20.2 minutes.^A
 - 3) The lack of transportation can lead to social isolation and limit a household's opportunities.
- B. Causes:**
- 1) Our service area is located in the Midwest, where the population is more dispersed.
 - 2) Mass transit exists only in urban areas and struggles with low ridership.
 - 3) Mass transit, where it does exist, is not affordable for many CAEI customers.
 - 4) Auto ownership is expensive.
 - 5) Some lack a driver's license, either because they never learned to drive, or because they have old fines or suspensions.
- C. Community Resources:**
- 1) Mass transit exists in the Quad Cities, Clinton, and Muscatine.
 - 2) Uber and other rideshare services are more available than in the past but may prove cost-prohibitive.
 - 3) Medicaid can assist with payment for transportation services to access medical care.
 - 4) RiverBend Transit provides job commute transportation services and transportation to people with disabilities.
 - 5) Tots 2 Teens provides transportation services for children in the Quad Cities area for a fee.

Families Lack Education Needed for Greater Self-Sufficiency:

- A. Conditions:**
- 1) 8.49% of the adult population in the service area do not have a high school diploma or GED/Hi-Set.^A
 - a. Students from households with a low-income graduate at rates lower than their peers. This is especially acute in the Durant, Camanche, Muscatine, and Davenport school districts.^B
 - b. Lack of a high school diploma or equivalent is higher in western Muscatine County and northwest Scott County.^A
 - c. 7% (28) of the 403 Customer Needs Survey respondents asked for help getting their GED/Hi-Set. 19 of the 28 customers requesting assistance live in Scott County.^C
 - d. 13 Head Start/Early Head Start parents completed their Hi-Set during the 2018-2019 school year.^F
 - 2) 12% (49) of the 403 Customer Needs Survey respondents asked for help attaining their two-year college degree.^C

- 3) 9% (36) of the 403 Customer Needs Survey respondents asked for help attaining their four-year college degree.^C
- 4) Just 5.6% of all Head Start parents attended school or job training during the 2018-2019 school year.^F
- 5) There are high numbers of English-language-learners, especially in Muscatine County, with the highest rates in the West Liberty area.^B

B. Causes:

- 1) It is significantly more difficult for first generation college students to navigate the college application and enrollment processes. One parent respondent in Head Start said she “didn’t know where to start.”
- 2) Education is expensive, and grants and scholarships often do not cover the full cost of attendance.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) The community colleges and universities in the area have many programs to assist students and prospective students.
- 2) Eastern Iowa Community Colleges offer Hi-Set assistance.
- 3) Mid City High School helps retain young people in high school by altering curriculum delivery and addressing supportive services needs.
- 4) The Future Ready Iowa program assists adults with returning to college in high-need career fields.

Families Need Legal Assistance:

A. Conditions:

- 1) Legal assistance was the fifth most-commonly identified unmet household need on the Customer Needs Assessment. One out of every six households surveyed said they needed legal help.^C

B. Causes:

- 1) Respondents to the Customer Needs Survey were asked why they needed legal assistance. The most common reasons cited were:
 - a. Divorce (15 or 4%)
 - b. Debt/Bankruptcy (10 or 2%)
 - c. Child Support (9 or 2%)
 - d. Child Custody (6)
 - e. Traffic Violations/License Suspensions (5)
 - f. Rent/Landlord Issues (4)
 - g. Felony/Expungement (2)
 - h. Paying off fines (1)
 - i. Disability (1)
 - j. Employment Issues (1)
 - k. Credit Issues (1)^C
- 2) Immigration issues are a major area of legal need based on qualitative data.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Iowa Legal Aid provides legal services to residents with low income.
- 2) For cases Iowa Legal Aid cannot address (criminal and other cases), there are limited attorneys, and payment plans/options are often unaffordable.

Families Need Help Staying Warm in the Winter:

A. Conditions:

- 1) More than one out of every six households responding to the Customer Needs Survey stated that they needed help solving problems with their utility company (62/403 or 16%).^C
- 2) CAEI provided utility bill assistance through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to 8,599 households in the previous year. Just over one-fourth of the households assisted had a disconnection notice or were disconnected at some point during the year.^E

B. Causes:

- 1) Winter heating costs consume a larger percentage of a household with low income's budget. Heating costs are regressive.
- 2) It is difficult for some households to apply for energy assistance. CAEI is continuing to expand its online application capabilities.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) In addition to CAEI's LIHEAP program and other supportive utility services, the SEAP program provides limited assistance to households.
- 2) The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) provides oversight to the utility companies.
- 3) Several utility companies provide funding to assist customers with utility costs.

Families Need Safe and Affordable Housing:

A. Conditions:

- 1) Eviction rates in the service area (3.38%) are significantly higher than the State of Iowa (2.01%) and the United States as a whole (2.34%). The rate is significantly higher in Scott County (3.92%).^A
 - a. The eviction rate in Davenport is 4.72%.^B
 - b. A high eviction rate in Scott County has placed a strain on available shelter beds. Scott County has a high percentage of individuals in shelters for 90 consecutive days compared to the rest of the service area.^B
- 2) The Customer Needs Survey revealed that area families are having a difficult time finding and maintaining safe and affordable housing:
 - a. 35 (9%) of the 403 respondents said they needed help finding a safe & affordable place to live.
 - b. 35 (9%) of the 403 respondents said they needed help making necessary home repairs.^C

- 2) There are 5,039 vacant houses in the service area according to data reported by the United States Postal Service. This equates to a vacancy rate of 3.7% of all houses.
 - a. The vacancy rate in Clinton County is 7.4%.^A
- 3) The Head Start and Early Head Start program served a total of 26 homeless children during the 2018-2019 school year. 10 of the 26 children were infants or toddlers.^F
- 4) The Community Stakeholder survey revealed the following about the community's view of housing issues:
 - a. 57% believe there are not enough safe and affordable housing units for low-income people.
 - b. 67% believe there are not enough shelter beds.
 - c. 75% believe homelessness is a serious issue.^D
- 5) CAEI assisted 94 households with rental assistance funding in the previous year, to help the household avoid eviction.^E Requests for rental assistance far out-paced available resources.

B. Causes:

- 1) The cause for the very high eviction rate in Scott County is not known and required further investigation.
- 2) The area lacks safe and affordable housing. There is significant housing development in the area, but it is largely market-rate housing.
- 3) Households who have a member who has a criminal conviction have a difficult time finding housing.
- 4) The Section 8 waiting list is very long, and most families wait years to secure a voucher.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Salvation Army serves as the single point of contact/entry for homelessness services in Scott County.
- 2) Homeless shelters in Scott, Clinton, and Muscatine counties provide a limited number of shelter beds.
- 3) Humility of Mary Housing provides transitional housing.
- 4) Family Resources provides temporary housing for victims of domestic violence.
- 5) Ecumenical Housing Development Group develops housing in Davenport.
- 6) Iowa Legal Aid provides education and support for landlord/tenant issues.
- 7) Housing Councils in Scott and Clinton County provide a venue for coordinated housing assistance.
- 8) Clinton County has formed a collaborative group to improve access to safe and affordable housing.
- 9) CAEI provides home weatherization services and Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA).

Families Need Employment Skills Enhancement:

A. Conditions:

- 1) The Customer Needs Assessment identified the following factors related to employment and job readiness
 - a. 39% of adults who are currently working are looking for a better job.
 - b. 37% of households responding reported that their income decreased in the past year.
 - c. 15% of the respondents asked for help finding a better job.
 - d. One-third of survey respondents were currently unemployed and looking for work despite a historically low unemployment rate in Iowa.
 - e. 8% of survey respondents stated that they do not know how to search for jobs.^C
- 2) Families enrolled in the Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS) program are receiving Family Investment Program (FIP, or welfare) benefits. The goal of the program is to help the family overcome barriers to gainful employment. In the fiscal year 2018, 40% of all families who exited the FaDSS program had increased income compared to their income at enrollment in FaDSS. The average increase in monthly income for all FaDSS families was \$299.27, with an average decrease in FIP payments of \$201.03, demonstrating the overall effectiveness of intensive case management.^G
 - a. 49 people enrolled in the FaDSS Program received job coaching in the previous year.^E
- 3) To qualify for the Head Start or Early Head Start program, a family cannot have an income that exceeds 100% (130% in some circumstances). Even though families of enrolled children have very low incomes, more than half are working:
 - a. 45% of Head Start/Early Head Start children live in a family where all parents are working.
 - b. 58.2% of Head Start/Early Head Start children live in a family where at least one parent is working.^F
- 4) The unemployment rate in the service area in July 2019 was 3.1%. The rate closely mirrors the Iowa rate over time.^A
- 5) 49 people enrolled in the FaDSS Program received job coaching in the previous year.^E
- 6) CAEI provided employment supports (required work clothing, car repairs to get to work, etc.) for 42 individuals in the previous year.^E

B. Causes:

- 1) Customers reported various reasons their income decreased in the past year, but the most common reasons were that an adult lost their job, or had reduced hours at their job.^C
- 2) A 2018 statewide Workforce Needs Assessment determined the top reason positions were difficult to fill is due to a general lack of applicants, as well as a lack

of qualified applicants with hard or specific occupational skills required for the work.^B

- 3) While there are many job openings in the community currently, few of the positions offer a living wage, full-time hours, and/or benefits.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Iowa Workforce Development provides job search training and resources.
- 2) Eastern Iowa Community College offers many employment training and certificate programs.
- 3) The new Future Ready Iowa initiative will assist people returning to college and those pursuing degrees and credentials in high-need areas.

Young Children Need Additional Supports for Healthy Development:

A. Conditions:

- 1) Child abuse rates in the service area are higher than the state average.
 - a. Clinton County has the third-highest child abuse rate in the state at 21.42/1,000 children.
 - b. There is a significantly higher rate of abuse for children under one-years-old.^B
- 2) More than one out of four Head Start and Early Head Start children live in two-parent families (132 families). Yet, just 72 fathers/grandfathers engaged in their child's education during the 2018-2019 school year.^F
 - a. 88% of HS/EHS parents believe CAEI's HS/EHS program is friendly and inviting for men.^B
- 3) Young children placed in foster care can benefit from Head Start and Early Head Start. During the 2018-2019 school year, the program enrolled less than one of every three children referred (30.4%). 56 children were referred, and 17 were enrolled.^F
 - a. The rate of children in foster care is significantly higher in Clinton County (4.7% of children) than in Iowa (2.0% of children).^B
 - b. Black or African American children are disproportionately placed in foster care in Iowa.^B
- 4) Child Behavior Management was a high-need area identified in the survey of Head Start/Early Head Start parents and staff.
 - a. Parents rated it as their second-highest family stressor, behind financial concerns.
 - b. Staff rated child behavior management as the number one stressor for families.^B
- 5) 92% of the children in the Head Start program demonstrated the skills needed for school readiness as of the end of the 2019 school year.^E

B. Causes:

- 1) The higher rates of children in foster care, especially for Black or African American children is partially the result of high incarceration rates in Iowa, especially for minority community members.^B

- 2) Parents and staff have pointed out that Head Start and Early Head Start have significant documentation, assessment, and paperwork requirements. There is a concern that the structured time and processes, while valuable, have zapped a measure of joy from the instructional processes.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) There are a variety of child care options in the service area. CCR&R provides parent referral services and support and training for child care providers.
- 2) The local colleges and universities provide higher education for early childhood education professionals in the community.
- 3) CAEI works with Families Inc., Family Resources, the Child Abuse Council, Vera French, and the Area Education Associations to support the mental health needs of young children and their families.

Families Have Unmet Health Needs:

A. Conditions:

- 1) County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, an initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, ranks the health and wellness of the residents of each county based on longevity and on how well people feel when alive.
 - a. Cedar County was ranked the healthiest county in Iowa.
 - b. Muscatine was ranked 63/99.
 - c. Scott was ranked 70/99.
 - d. Clinton was ranked 79/99.^B
- 2) A high percentage of children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head start had a diagnosis of asthma during the 2018-2019 school year.
 - a. 7.4% (31) of Head Start children have asthma.
 - b. 9.6% (16) of Early Head Start children have asthma.^F
- 3) Hospital admissions and emergency room visits for asthma are higher than the state average in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott counties.^B
- 4) 30% of Head Start children have a body mass index (BMI) that falls in the overweight or obese range.^F
- 5) The four most commonly-prescribed narcotics in Iowa in 2017 were all opioids.^B
- 6) Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STIs) are higher than the statewide rate in Scott and Clinton counties.^B
- 7) The teen birth rate in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott counties is higher than the state teen birth rate.^B
- 8) CAEI's Head Start and Early Head Start completed 334 developmental screenings, 559 vision screenings, and 365 dental screenings during the 2018-2019 school year.^F

B. Causes:

- 1) High rates of asthma may be correlated with low air quality in the service area. The air qualities in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott Counties (the same counties with high asthma rates) is rated as among the worst/dirtiest in the United States.^B

- 2) Smoking rates are higher in Clinton, Muscatine, and Scott Counties (the same counties with high asthma rates).^B
- 3) Higher STI rates may be the result of fewer accessible reproductive health providers in the area.
- 4) In the CAEI Head Start and Early Head Start program, parents have told us that it is difficult to provide medication that can be left at school, such as an inhaler for a child's asthma, as their medical coverage often does not cover a second prescription.
- 5) CAEI customers have explained to us that it is often more expensive to buy healthy food and that local grocery stores have closed in neighborhoods, making it difficult to access quality food due to transportation barriers.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Community Health Care provides comprehensive health and dental services to area residents regardless of income or insurance coverage.
- 2) HAWK-I is Iowa's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).
- 3) County health departments provide education, treatment, and training resources.

4. **Key Findings: Community Needs:** The Community Needs Assessment also revealed community needs. Community needs are needs that have an impact on an entire community.

The Community Lacks Living Wage Jobs:

A. Conditions:

- 1) 71.1% of community stakeholders believe there are not enough jobs in the community that pay \$15+ per hour. The same group of stakeholders believes there are sufficient jobs that are part-time and/or pay less than \$15 per hour.^D
- 2) 7 out of 10 community stakeholders believe underemployment is a problem in the service area. Underemployment is defined as happening when highly skilled workers are working in low-skilled jobs, and when part-time workers would rather be full-time workers but cannot find jobs.^D

B. Causes:

- 1) As described above in the family needs section, a large number of potential workers expressed that they lack the education, skills, and/or experience to access higher-wage jobs.
- 2) The area has lost a large number of manufacturing and industrial positions that tend to be higher-paying jobs.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) Chambers of commerce and economic development boards and commissions are working to bring jobs to the area.

The Community Needs Improved Safety:

A. Conditions:

- 1) 69% of Community Stakeholder survey respondents believe abandoned buildings and houses are a problem in the service area.^D
 - a. 11.3% of business structures are vacant in the service area, according to records generated by the United States Postal Service.^A
- 2) Davenport has a crime rate significantly higher than the national average.^B

B. Causes:

- 1) Public safety concerns in Scott County (Davenport) center largely around gun violence and youth.
- 2) Customers responding to the Customer Needs Survey provided anecdotal responses that there are not enough youth diversion programs, youth recreational outlets, and youth sports programs in the community.^C

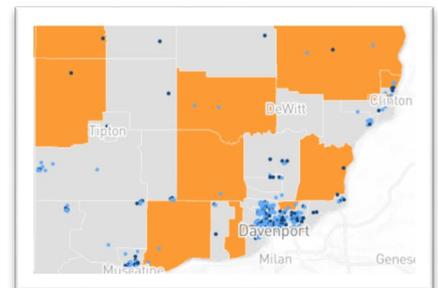
C. Community Resources:

- 1) Several community groups in Scott County have held forums to begin to address the concerns regarding safety.
- 2) Scott County is developing criminal diversion programs.

The Community Needs More Quality Affordable Child Care:

A. Conditions:

- 1) 63% of Community Stakeholder survey respondents believe more after-hours and evening quality child care is needed.^D
- 2) All parents in the household are working in 75% of the Iowa households with children under the age of six.
 - a. Cedar County: 85%
 - b. Clinton County: 76%
 - c. Muscatine County: 78%
 - d. Scott County: 72%^H
- 3) The number of child care spaces (homes and centers) in the four-county service area declined by 1,011 spaces from 2013 to 2015 – a drop in capacity of 7%.
 - a. Capacity in Iowa dropped by 6% over the same period.
 - b. The reduction in capacity was highest in Clinton County, with a 10% loss in capacity.^H
- 4) 23 percent of people in Iowa live in a child care desert. A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. (See map. Source:



<https://childcaredeserts.org/index.html?state=IA&split=true>)

- 5) Only about one out of every four child care providers in the region participates in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).^H
- 6) Child care is prohibitively expensive, especially for infant care. Center-based infant care ranges from \$170 per week in Muscatine County to \$224 per week in Scott County.^H
- 7) School districts across Iowa have greatly expanded their four-year-old Statewide Voluntary Preschool spaces. This has resulted in the reduced enrollment of four-year-old children at private child care centers and homes.
- 8) CAEI's Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) program promotes the development of new quality child care providers, and the retention of existing providers in its 19 county region. In the previous year, there was a net gain of ten child care providers who are licensed/registered.^E

B. Causes:

- 1) The number of child care providers has decreased consistently for several years in Iowa. The cause for the decline is unknown, but it is suspected that a strong economy with a low unemployment rate is a factor. Child care providers relate to us that the field has a low rate of pay and increasing levels of regulation.
- 2) Child care providers are a diverse group of people with businesses ranging from very small (sole proprietorships) to very large programs with multiple centers. As such, they have varied business and professional needs that require tailored approaches to support.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) CAEI's CCR&R program serves 19 counties in southeast Iowa.
- 2) There are numerous home providers and child care centers.
- 3) The Early Childhood Iowa boards in the service area provide comprehensive early childhood services.
- 4) School districts in the service area deliver the Statewide Voluntary Preschool program.

5. **Key Findings: Agency Needs:** Agency capacity needs based on the needs and trends identified are included to build the organization's resources and skills.

The Agency Needs Improved Employee Retention:

A. Conditions:

- 1) Employee retention rate (the percentage of CAEI employees that have been employed for more than one year) has hovered between 74% and 82% over the past few years. The average rate for all non-profits is approximately 80%. (source: CAEI human resources records).



- 2) Turnover is highest in Head Start (but not Early Head Start). The Head Start Teacher retention rate was 61% last year (compared to 61% in Iowa, 70% nationally). The retention rate for Education Assistants in Head Start was approximately 50% (no state or national comparison data is available).

B. Causes:

- 1) Staff consistently reports that higher pay would make them more likely to stay with CAEI. Retail organizations in the community are often paying more for “less-skilled” positions.
 - a. We believe one of the reasons turnover is lower in Early Head Start is that we pay above the pay rate in the community for similar credentials (an Associate’s degree).
- 2) CAEI exit interviews show the employee benefits package is competitive, but that health insurance affordability is sometimes a concern.
- 3) CAEI’s onboarding and orientation system could be updated and improved, based on agency exit interview feedback.
- 4) Turnover in the early childhood education field (CAEI’s highest area of turnover) is very high in the larger local community also.

C. Community Resources:

- 1) The TEACH program provides support to early childhood professionals to help them further their higher education.

6. **Key Findings: Customer Satisfaction:** As part of the Community Needs Assessment, we also collected and analyzed customer satisfaction data through the Customer Needs Survey (403 surveys returned), and as part of the Head Start Community Needs Assessment (275 surveys returned).

Overview of Customer Satisfaction:

1. The Customer Needs and Satisfaction Assessment revealed an overall positive experience for agency customers. There were very few respondents expressing dissatisfaction with services. The statement “The staff of the Agency were friendly and helpful” received the most positive ratings. The statement “I was informed about other services available” received the fewest positive ratings (although two-thirds of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with that statement).^C
2. Parents responding to the Head Start Community Needs Assessment parent survey provided the following results:
 - a. 96% of parents believe HS/EHS staff understand and respect their family’s culture.
 - b. 96.3% believe the program is getting their child ready for kindergarten.
 - c. 94.1% think their child’s school is a safe place to learn.^B

Customer Service Recommendations Based on the Data:

1. Customers in all four counties expressed an interest in expanded office hours, especially earlier morning hours. This may be a result of more working customers with varied work

schedules.^c CAEI should explore expanded office hours through the flexibility of employee scheduling.

2. Several customers on the Customer Needs Assessment survey stated that they didn't like that they had to return to the office multiple times and that when they returned, they had to see a different worker who told them a different thing.^c CAEI should evaluate how to reduce multiple trips for customers and should evaluate allowing customers to request specific workers.
3. Just 3% of the Agency's customers said they heard about CAEI on social media.^c The agency has no social media presence and should consider how to thoughtfully build its social media marketing.
4. Several customers remarked that they would like to apply for services online more frequently/for more things.^c CAEI should continue to build this capacity as an option.